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On the Net

Baran, Dreyfus, Merleau-Ponty, and Austin¹

Yusuke Kaneko

§1. Introduction

The Internet was born in 1960's, then *Internet ethics* appeared as a branch of information ethics.

Information ethics is that branch of *applied ethics*² which studies and analyzes social and ethical impacts of ICT (*Information and Communication Technology*)³.

It seems, however, our status on the Net⁴ is not yet scrutinized. True, Norbert Wiener (1894-1964), the father of information ethics, considered humans the bearers of *information*⁵. But information is mathematical stuff⁶. Wiener's view seemingly robs humans of that spontaneity of thinking⁷ which is necessary for ethics.

We are all humans even on the Net, not a pattern of information processing. In other words, we are still in a position to do something *ethical*, *ethically good* or *ethically bad*.

This is our focus below.

Most exchanges on the Net are trifles as we see on SNS's⁸, such as blogs, BBS's⁹, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. And Dreyfus, another pioneer of Internet ethics, simply warned us about inhumanity—in the sense that the transaction on the Net is merely virtual—of the Internet (see ch.2 below).

Nevertheless, focusing on its opposite side is necessary. True, we are virtual on the Net, or more precisely, anonymous and purely verbal entities. But the interchange we are involved in has potential risks we never think of. We survey this pitfall on the Net by reference to the so-called speech-act theory (ch.3-ch.4).

Chapter 1. Overall Picture

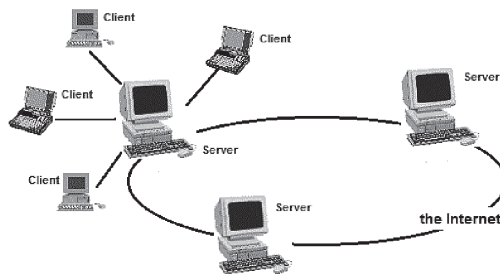
Our object of study is the Internet. But what is the Internet? You may not answer this question well. To begin with, therefore, we need a clear image of the Internet.

This investigation will lead us to an ideology underlying the Net. We reach it through a short history of the Internet.

§2. Picture of the Internet¹⁰

Asked what it is like to be on the Net, you may not answer so well, but can appeal to the following concise picture:

(1) Client-Server System¹¹



This is the simplest way to overview the World Wide Web¹². Each of us is situated as “Client,” connected to a host computer, which is depicted larger, called “Server.” These host computers constitute the World Wide Web substantially.

§3. No Center

With the simplest picture provided, one thing looms up. The World Wide Web has *no center*.

Servers are providers. They only provide the Internet services, the connection to the Net; they do not regulate the conduct of their users.

In a word, the realm of the Internet is *anarchic*. Actually, this was perceived as early as in the nineties:

- (2) Why do people want to be “on the Internet?” One of the main reasons is simple freedom. The Internet is a rare example of a true, modern, functional anarchy. There is no “Internet Inc.” There are no official censors, no bosses, no board of directors, no stockholders. In principle, any node can speak as a peer to any other node, as long as it obeys the rules of the TCP/IP protocols, which are strictly technical, not social or political. (Sterling 1993)
- (3) To withstand a nuclear blast and keep on ticking, the Net was built without a central command authority. That means that nobody owns it, nobody runs it, nobody has the power to kick anybody off for good. There isn’t even a master switch that can shut it down in case of emergency. “It’s the closest thing to true anarchy that ever existed,” says Clifford Stoll, a Berkeley astronomer famous on the Internet for having trapped a German spy who was trying to use it to break into U.S. military computers. (Elmer-DeWitt 2001)

§4. History of the Internet

Bruce Sterling (1954-), who wrote (2), is a famous science fiction writer. Philip Elmer-DeWitt (1949-), who wrote (3), is a contributor to TIME. This secular taste (an SF writer and TIME contributor) has been detested by not a few specialists, or computer scientists on the scenes¹³.

In fact, we are surprised to see “a nuclear blast.” Why was the Internet concerned with such stuff? A little retrospect may help.

Let us look into a history of the Internet. The following story is commonly known:

- (4) In 1962, a nuclear confrontation seemed imminent. The United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) were embroiled in the Cuban missile crisis. Both the US and the USSR were in the process of building hair-trigger nuclear ballistic missile systems. Each country pondered post-nuclear attack scenarios. US authorities considered ways to communicate in the aftermath of a nuclear attack. How could any sort of “command and control network” survive? Paul Baran, a researcher at RAND, offered a solution: [D]esign a more robust communications network using “redundancy” and “digital” technology. At the time, naysayers dismissed Baran’s idea as unfeasible. But working with colleagues at RAND, Baran persisted. This effort would eventually become the foundation for the World Wide Web (RAND 2015).

On the extended line of this story, the preceding comments (2) and (3) appeared, although specialists have refused it¹⁴.

This story dates back to the mid-20th. The main character is Paul Baran (1926-2011). He is considered the man who invented the Internet¹⁵.

Baran worked for RAND, a think tank in the United States (the acronym of Research AND Development)¹⁶.

1962 was the time people could still imagine a WWII-like collision recurring. This drove the United States, where RAND is situated, to work out the measures against the worst-case scenarios. The war against the Soviet Union, the current Russia, was main concern.

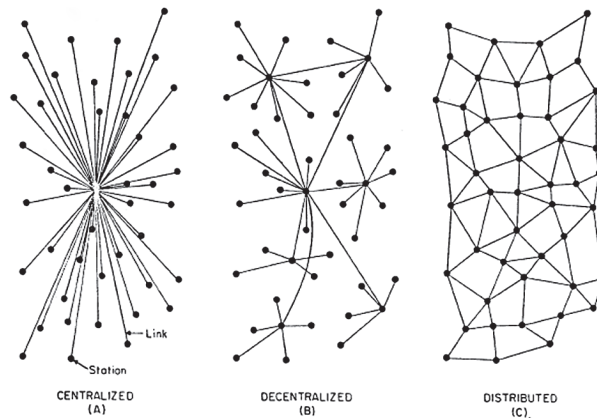
Nuclear weapons, which appeared at the end of WWII, were still developed to extend their ranges (see “in the process of building hair-trigger nuclear ballistic missile systems” above). This was a real threat, culminating in the Cuban crisis. The Soviet Union deployed missiles in Cuba to defend its “comrade” communist government born through the Cuban revolution in 1959¹⁷.

§5. Baran's solution

The United States was exposed to the risks of the fatal destruction by the potential war against the USSR.

Meanwhile, officials were asking how they could keep their communication network in the case where the mainland was assaulted by the hair-trigger nuclear ballistic missiles. The solution Paul Baran gave to this problem was really ingenious:

(5) Distributed Network (Baran 1962, p.4)



Centralized, Decentralized and Distributed Networks

§6. Distributed Network

Facing Fig. (5), we can find Baran's idea on the rightmost side, which is named a *distributed network*.

Listen to Baran's explanation:

- (6) [The] communication network shall be composed of several hundred stations which must intercommunicate with one another. Survivability [of this network means] the percentage of stations surviving a physical attack [...]. The centralized network [namely (A)] is basically vulnerable [because] destruction of the central node destroys intercommunication between [the] stations. [... That is why] we shall turn to consider [the] communication networks as "distributed" as possible. (Baran 1962, p.3)

In short, if we assemble the "stations," which relay the information sent by each spot, into one point, as seen in (A) of Fig. (5), the attack destroying that very spot will spoil everything, or the whole network.

The same is true of the decentralized network, namely (B) of Fig. (5). Thus, to avoid

the worst-case scenario of the nuclear attack, which was called “a physical attack” in (6), the network named (C) of *Fig. (5)* became the best solution. It led to the birth of the Internet.

Chapter 2. Dreyfus’s Criticism

This is a short history of the Internet, which tells us its strategic origin. The Internet was developed and designed to survive the worst-case scenario.

Soon after its birth, however, the Internet dissolved into playrooms, which we call SNS’s today.

In this chapter, we see the criticism by Dreyfus, who called the current situation of the Internet “the hi-tech synthesis of the worst features of the newspaper and the coffeehouse.”¹⁸

§7. SNS

This is how the Internet came into existence. It was originally designed to send and receive information even in the worst-case scenario.

Soon after its birth, however, users went in another direction. Sterling, who wrote the previous comment of (2), described it as follows:

- (7) By the second year of operation, however, an odd fact became clear. ARPANET’s users had warped the computer-sharing network into a dedicated, high-speed, federally subsidized electronic post-office. The main traffic on ARPANET was not long-distance computing. Instead, it was news and personal messages. Researchers were using ARPANET to collaborate on projects, to trade notes on work, and eventually, to downright gossip and schmooze. People had their own personal user accounts on the ARPANET computers, and their own personal addresses for electronic mail. Not only were they using ARPANET for person-to-person communication, but they were very enthusiastic about this particular service [...] It wasn’t long before the invention of the mailing-list, [namely] an ARPANET broadcasting technique in which an identical message could be sent automatically to large numbers of network subscribers. Interestingly, one of the first really big mailing-lists was “SF- LOVERS,” for science fiction fans. Discussing science fiction on the network was not work-related and was frowned upon by many ARPANET computer administrators, but this didn’t stop it from happening. (Sterling 1993)

ARPANET¹⁹ is the earliest form of the Internet that was born in 1969, constituted of only four computers at the beginning, later extending to fifteen to thirty-seven nodes (Sterling 1993).

Soon after its birth, according to Sterling, the users of the Net warped it into a “electronic post-office” to “downright gossip and schmooze.”

After all, the Internet was destined to be the vehicle for SNS, such as a blog, BBS, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, as we use it today.

§8. High-Tech Synthesis of the Worst Features

In spite of the serious efforts of the inventors, the Net headed for entertaining purposes. Blogs, BBS's, etc., where visitors chat freely, became main usage of the Net.

The philosopher who critically tackled this issue was Hubert Dreyfus (1929-2011), who also had an experience to work for RAND²⁰.

A point for which Dreyfus blamed the Internet was its poor quality of discussion as we see it every time we visit a BBS, for example.

By reference to Søren Kierkegaard (1813-55), an existentialist in 19th century, Dreyfus criticized the current situation of the Net as follows:

- (8) Kierkegaard would surely have seen in the Internet [–] with its Websites full of anonymous information from all over the world and [with] its interest groups that anyone in the world can join without qualifications and where one can discuss any topic endlessly without consequences [–] the hi-tech synthesis of the worst features of the newspaper and the coffeehouse. (Dreyfus 2001, p.77)

The newspaper and the coffeehouse existed in Kierkegaard's time as well. Kierkegaard blamed these places for their poor quality of discussion, which we may simply call "chat" today.

If Kierkegaard were still alive now, Dreyfus thought, he would find on the Net "the high-tech synthesis of the worst features" of the newspaper and the coffeehouse in his time.

§9. Dreyfus's criticism

Including other arguments with this view of Kierkegaard, Dreyfus's criticism of the Internet can be summarized in the following way:

- (9) Problems of the Net (Dreyfus 2001, p.75, p.78)
- (i) People on the Net lack the first-hand experience.
 - (ii) People on the Net fabricate everything only in the head abstractly.
 - (iii) People on the Net do not take any responsibility for the information they provide.

These are realized on the extended line of ARPANET. The mailing-lists of SF-LOVERS set a good precedent of Dreyfus's concern.

§10. Merleau-Ponty

People can talk the story without its direct perception. This was the point Dreyfus blamed

the Internet for.

It is understandable more easily if we know the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), who Dreyfus owed much argumentation to²¹.

Merleau-Ponty thought the body (*le corps*) plays an important role in understanding the world²².

On the Internet, however, most of our transaction is done without any bodily, perceptual contact. As seen in e-mail, for example, we can make a deal without seeing even the face of the customer.

Dreyfus thought it a serious problem²³.

§11. Purely Verbal Entities

Bodiless interchanges lacking perceptions appeared so weird to Dreyfus. That drove him to criticize the Net in itself.

Meanwhile, on the Net, we may have a positive picture, where we can fly from one place to another quickly, as if we were free from bodily boundaries. The communication network allows us to indulge in such an ideal.

Dreyfus admonished us on *Net enthusiasm* of this kind, the criticism of which the first part of *On the Internet* was directed to (Dreyfus 2001, p.4).

Nevertheless, Merleau-Ponty, a philosopher of the body, apparently endorsed a view similar to the Net enthusiasm. He said as follows:

- (10) We find a certain culture playing an essential role in perceiving others: *language*. Imagine a dialogue. In a dialogue, our verbal exchanges form a terrain shared among us. My thought and your thought are knitted into a fabric. My words and your words are called for naturally depending on progress of talk. We cooperate with each other; none of us takes the initiative. In a dialogue, you and I form one persona; you are no longer another person appearing outside my consciousness in a Sartrean manner²⁴. Each of us is a collaborator for the other, and this reciprocity is as perfect as if my perspective glided into yours so that we could coexist in ubiquity. In a dialogue, I set myself free from my ego, while your thought remains yours. It is not me who created your thought, but I can seize it soon after its birth as if I had had it. Your objection robs me of that thought which I should have known I could not have. It looks as if there were a mirror between us. When our dialogue ends, I return to myself, recalling something useful only for my life, while you return to yourself to be an alien unintelligible for me. This separation, however, may occur to adolescents or grown-ups, not to small children who do not yet have their own egos. (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p.412)²⁵

Focusing on language, Merleau-Ponty ingeniously brought into relief a horizon of our dialogue and its confinement to nothing like bodily boundaries or egos whatsoever.

Like this dialogue, we may emancipate ourselves from our daily thought and egos at least during conversation. And this should have been an original ideal of the Net.

Let us get as close to this ideal as possible. For this purpose, we must look into the function of language in more detail.

Chapter 3. L'intermonde and Utilitarianism

Dreyfus blamed our interchange on the Net for lacking bodily perceptions, following Merleau-Ponty. But Merleau-Ponty himself had another ideal, where we set ourselves free from bodily boundaries to be purely verbal. With this horizon taken, we explore the realm of the Internet much deeper.

§12. L'intermonde

Although there was nothing like the Internet in Merleau-Ponty's time, his life was much the same as ours. He knew newspapers, the telephone, TV, etc., which surely led him to the image like *Fig. (1)*.

Merleau-Ponty called it *l'intermonde*, developing his thought:

- (11) In any case, during dialogue, you and I need to agree to coexistence. While this is true, if none of us voluntarily engages in it, who on earth communicates, then? Who does the communication hold for? Suppose we communicate with each other, lacking the sense of coexistence. Then, our communication will soon break down into pieces, where each of us manipulates the keyboard 100 kilometers apart. (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p.415)²⁶

Merleau-Ponty knew we can be purely verbal. But at the same time, he cared about potential lack of coexistence. Ironically enough, Merleau-Ponty anticipated our problems on the Net so well in this respect as well.

§13. Inquiry into Language

Merleau-Ponty knew what it is like to be on the Net. We can be purely verbal, while our interchange is on the verge of breaking down. To overcome the dilemma, probably we need a detailed analysis of our *speech-acts*.

Unfortunately, Merleau-Ponty did not have no knowledge of that. In his time, like Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), there were almost no philosophers in France who paid attention to the function of language. It is after the discovery of Ferdinand de Saussure

(1857-1913) that they got interested in *langue/langage*²⁷, though it led them to the notorious *structuralism* after all.

We should take the other way around in order to see, as it were, dynamism on the Net. More concretely, we should appeal to another philosophy Dreyfus belonged to but broke with: *analytic philosophy*²⁸.

We take up, as its representative, the *speech-act theory* of John Langshaw Austin (1911-1960) below.

§14. Example

The speech-act theory is a theory analyzing our verbal exchanges as *action*.

This is not common in terms of tradition of analytic philosophy, as you see in static logical analysis like $\exists x[Fx \wedge Gx \wedge \forall y\{Gy \rightarrow (y=x)\}]$ ²⁹.

But the speech-act theory is the best to consider our interchange, because our verbal exchanges are not static computational arrangement of signs³⁰. Typed words are action, and the only clue to know who s/he is.

Let us take an example.

Imagine you are on a BBS, reading comments by someone disgusting. He boasts, boasts, boasts ..., even saying he will start a business. Fed up with it, then, you type the following words:

(12) I object that you can't do that.

You picked a fight.

§15. Sketch

On the Net, we have interchanges of this kind so frequently. Sometimes we get pleased, and at other times, words get on the nerves.

We do things with words. *Insult, advice, objection, dismissal, encouragement, etc.*, how many acts humans do with words, in reality. The focus of the speech-act theory is on this very aspect.

Let us see, on trial, how your speech-act affects another person in the preceding example:

(13) Utilitarian Sketch of Speech-act



With the words of (12), you picked a fight. Your act is simply named *Insult here*³¹.

The focus is now on its consequence. You knew your act *causes* unpleasant feeling in another mind; that is, the man of annoyance is shocked by your words.

The arrow → shows this *causality*. With the act, you fulfilled your malicious wish, namely *pleasure of malevolence*, as the right side of Fig. (13) shows.

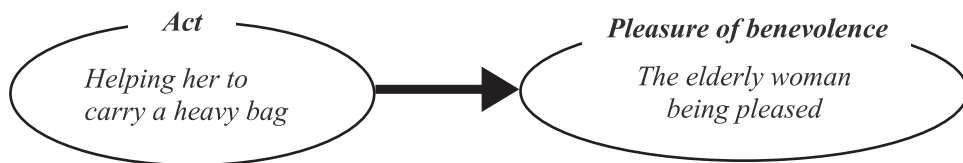
§16. Comparison with Ordinary Act³²

Pleasure of malevolence is a term of *utilitarianism*³³. We use this tenet tentatively for a simple comparison between speech-acts and *ordinary acts*.

Let us take another example of an ordinary act.

Imagine you see an elderly woman in trouble carrying her heavy bag. Then, probably some benevolent feeling comes into your mind, while you are sure that she will be pleased if you help her. That is why you decided to take the action of helping her:

(14) Utilitarian Sketch of Ordinary Act



This figure is much the same as the preceding one, (13), which makes parallel between speech-acts and ordinary acts.

§17. Aim of the Last Chapter

The pursuit of utilitarian ethics is not our aim at present. Our focus is on the parallelism between speech-acts and ordinary acts.

As seen above, speech-acts have much the same effect as ordinary acts, while ordinary acts have factors enough to constitute themselves, namely hands, legs, faces, bags, and so on, which we may call physical stuff.

Speech-acts lack such physical stuff. They express themselves only with words.

What difference does it make? This is our concern below. In the end, we will see the intricacy of speech-acts especially on the Net.

Chapter 4. Speech-act Theory

We made parallel between ordinary acts and speech-acts. But speech-acts lack physical stuff, which makes them difficult to understand.

We very likely misunderstand the intention of the speech-act. Or more precisely, we very likely misunderstand what type of speech-act we read or listen to.

In this last chapter, we bring into relief this aspect of speech-acts with the help of another theory developed by Grice.

§18. Perlocution

We saw a utilitarian effect of speech-acts in the previous chapter. Austin, a pioneer of the speech-act theory, actually noticed it.

He said as follows:

- (15) Saying something will often, or even normally, produce certain consequential effects upon the feelings, thoughts, or actions of the audience, or of the speaker, or of other persons: and it may be done with the design, intention, or purpose of producing them [...]. (Austin 1962, p.101)

Surprisingly enough, here Austin completely grasps the kernel of our preceding discussion. He named it *perlocution* (ibid.).

§19. Illocution

Austin knew a utilitarian effect of a speech-act. But his discussion is, looked into, unacceptable.

First of all, perlocution is not a speech-act in the strict sense. Illocution is “In saying something, we do something.” By contrast, perlocution is “By saying something, we do something.”³⁴

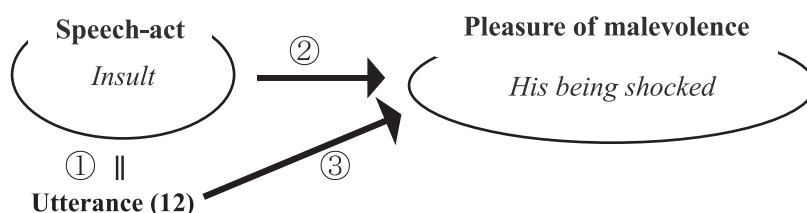
The difference between illocution and perlocution is “In” and “By,” which implies the speech-act, or illocution, is based on *conventionality*, while perlocution is based on *causality*.³⁵

We have already seen causality. The arrow → in Fig. (13) shows it. Meanwhile, conventionality is a kind of social fact that utterance (12), for example, turns into the act of insult.

§20. Revised Figure

Conventionality, which is required for illocution, is not so easy to describe. On trial, let us put it in the preceding figure:

- (16) Revised figure of (13)



The sign of equality = of ① shows conventionality, a social fact that utterance (12) turns into insult. Only after we take (12) as such, namely as the act of insult, it brings about the consequence (*his being shocked*), as the arrow → of ② indicates.

§21. Austin's Mistake

Viewed from the revised figure, we justly conclude that Austin apparently made a mistake in his discussion of speech-acts.

Take another look at (15). Therein, Austin took the course of ③ of Fig. (16) probably wrongly. He thought "saying something," namely utterance (12), directly causes the unpleasant feeling "of the audience."

But this is not the case. Typing the words in itself does not cause the unpleasant feeling of another person. The course ③ holds only when we surprise another person by saying "Boo," for example³⁶.

We must take the route from ① to ②, instead; that is, first, the utterance is taken as insult (①), and then, the speech-act makes another person shocked (②).

On this route from ① to ②, the main act is *insult as illocution*, not *making sounds or typing symbols* in itself. Thus, to know verbal exchange, only illocution should be dealt with. The route ③ of perlocution is illusion, so to speak.

§22. Enigma: Arrow ②

The causality of perlocution is different from the conventionality of illocution. This difference is the one between ③ and ② in Fig. (16). Another person is shocked by being insulted, not by hearing sounds by seeing letters.

Let us reflect on how the route from ① to ② holds.

It is not because the *meaning* of insult *includes* the feeling of unpleasantness. If a small child makes fun of you, that is, insults you, probably you never mind it. Or even in the case of (12), the man of annoyance might be so arrogant as to ignore your comment of insult. That is, your insult *never necessarily* results in the unpleasant feeling of another person; it always has *exceptions*. So a speech-act never includes its consequence as its meaning.

The reason why the route from ① to ② holds is not because we, as listeners/readers, scrutinize the intention of the speaker/writer's behind his/her words, either. Regardless of his/her intention, the speech-act could bring about a certain feeling in the listener/reader's mind, so the speaker/writer naturally say, "I did not mean that..."

There are two questions to take up.

First, how does such and such an utterance turn into the speech-act like insult? This is a question concerning ① of Fig. (16).

Second, how does such and such a speech-act cause such and such a feeling in our mind? This is a question concerning ② of Fig. (16).

Regarding the latter, namely the second question, it is too much to answer within this paper. It belongs to *philosophy of causation*, which has plural branches, such as *historical causation*³⁷, *legal causation*³⁸, and so on, while they all fall under *singular causation*³⁹.

Some justification by generality⁴⁰ may work, but basically we do not know why such and such singular causation holds.

The most familiar instance is certain words mentally hurting us, or more precisely, strongly irritating us in succession.

We cannot recognize the true reason for that.

Apparently, it does not belong to psychology, a brand of objective sciences. Rather, it stays an enigma in our social lives.

§23. Question: Arrow ①

We cannot know the reason why such and such a speech-act causes such and such a feeling. It stays an enigma.

This makes us turn the other way around. How does such and such an utterance turn into a specific speech-act? For example, you said (12). It turned into insult. Why?

This is the first question taken up in §22 and appropriate to the speech-act theory.

We should notice that it is not a question from a viewpoint of the speaker/writer.

Reflect on how you make a specific utterance. When you have an intention to insult a man of annoyance, are you concerned about the *word order*?

Your aim is to *insult* him, not an *arrangement of signs*⁴¹. The connection between the actual utterance like (12) and the intended speech-act like insult does not become a problem, seen from a standpoint of the speaker/writer. We *throw words as a whole* at the listener/reader, not caring about its precise word order.

The problem looms up, rather, when we take a viewpoint of the listener/reader. How does s/he take the utterance like (12) as the act of insult?

Note that this is the question concerning ① of Fig. (16), not ②.

Whether or not the act of insult causes unpleasant feeling in another mind depends on the, as it were, toughness of the listener/reader. It should be distinguished strictly from whether or not the utterance in itself is taken as insult.

The former, that is, whether or not the act of insult causes unpleasant feeling in another mind, was left aside as an enigmatic problem of causality as stated in the previous section (§22).

Then, why were the words (12) taken to be the act of insult by the listener/reader? This is the last question open to us.

§24. Misunderstanding or Implicature

Question ① of Fig. (16) is a problem of the listener/reader, not of the speaker/writer. It essentially includes the problem of *misunderstanding*.

In the preceding example, you said (12) with the intention to insult the man of annoyance on a BBS. But he might be so arrogant as to take your comment merely as an *advice*.

Let me illustrate it:



The advice in this context is taken a kind of *objection*. That is, your words could be taken as *strategic advice objecting* to too hasty a business plan. The man of annoyance might take your comment simply as such, positively.

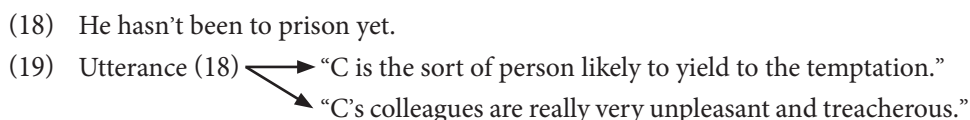
But your intention was to *insult* him, negatively.

Phenomena of this kind often occur in verbal exchanges, especially on the Net. One utterance turns into *different* speech-acts. This is a pitfall we most likely fall into during conversation. We name it *implicature*.

§25. Grice's Theory

Implicature is originally devised by Paul Grice (1913-1985), another key person of the speech-act theory.

The problematic is, however, that Grice thought implicature in the context of *utterances*. To take an example:⁴⁴



Imagine A and B are talking about a mutual friend, C, who is now working in a bank, A asks B how C is getting on in his job, and B replies (18), after he says "Oh quite well, I think, he likes his colleagues, and...."

The *additional utterances*, which B *did not say* in reality, are what Grice thought implicature. They are shown at the end of each arrow depicted in Fig. (19): "C is the sort of..." and "C's colleagues..."

§26. Risk on the Net

According to Grice, the problem the utterance like (12) potentially has is to turn into *another utterance*. No way can it be true, because the utterance is made *only once*.

See the previous figure of (16) again. The utterance is made *only once*. The problem is therefore: one utterance can have plural *meanings as speech-acts*.

You said (12) on a BBS, for example. It could have as plural meanings as those in Fig.

(17). Some viewers take it *fighting words*, and others take it a simple *advice*.

On the Net especially, misunderstanding and not misunderstanding come across each other to make the interchange more and more complex. We have seen exactly this risky situation with the help of the speech-act theory.

§27. Concluding Remark

On the Net, we are *ubiquitous*. Each of us can instantly appear on one place, rushing to another. This makes our interchanges too easy, too frequent, too intense and too irresponsible.

Dreyfus's concern was exactly about this, so that he warned us not to be involved in the interchange on the Net too much.

Nevertheless, the Net reflects our essence in some undeniable way. We are purely verbal on the Net, while our interchanges in actual societies are mostly verbal, not physical like helping an elderly woman bring a heavy bag.

We do many things with words. Exchanges on the Net light up this side more brightly than we expect.

Words are, however, destined to be misunderstood.

To make matters worse, we do not know why such and such a speech-act, which might be a result of misunderstanding, gets on the nerves⁴⁵.

All these make our verbal interchange more and more complex. And it is lit up most brightly on the Net.

True, SNS's, such as blogs, BBS's, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, are no more than trifles at the beginning. But as we commit ourselves in these trifles deeper and deeper, we cannot help reaching some point not to be overlooked.

We have tried to bring into relief a sidelight of this deep, serious, even criminatory aspect of our verbal exchange, which most likely occurs on the Net⁴⁶.

¹ This article is partially based on my lecture at Musashino University in 2016, and partially on my preceding study of Austin (Kaneko 2017, ch.2 of par.II, ch.1 of par.III).

² Applied ethics is a generic term for biomedical ethics (Beauchamp & Childress 2009), engineering ethics (Haris et al. 2004), business ethics (Beauchamp & Bowie 2003), and so on. This origin of Internet ethics justifies our later reference to utilitarianism (§ § 15-16), because utilitarianism is one of the bases for applied ethics (Kaneko 2017, sec. 65).

³ Read the description by Bynum (2008, intro).

⁴ We use the term "the Net" instead of "the Internet" frequently, following Dreyfus (2001, p.6 etc.).

⁵ See the description by Bynum (2008, 1.1).

⁶ Or information is no more than *news*. Mathematically defined, it is $\log_2 \frac{1}{P(E)}$ (Inoue 2007). This formula means information is merely a result of the event, *E*, *probabilistically* predicted.

- ⁷ Winer thought of thinking as information processing (Bynum 2008, 1.1). This is unacceptable (Kaneko 2017, sec.29-sec.32).
- ⁸ The acronym of Social Network Service.
- ⁹ The acronym of Bulletin Board System.
- ¹⁰ Section numbers are counted consecutively regardless of the changes of chapters.
- ¹¹ <http://www.ryuumu.co.jp/ryuumu/ain/vistacd02/e8.html>
- ¹² “The World Wide Web” is also used instead of “the Internet,” following Dreyfus (2001, p.79 etc.).
- ¹³ See note 14 below. As for this, Tommi Karttaavi of Internet Society (<https://www.internetsociety.org/>) sent me an interesting mail.

Bruce Sterling is a famous science fiction writer and keeping his article from the early days of the Internet Society on our website is probably more for historical reasons than historical accuracy in the scientific meaning. (received on March 7, 2016)

- ¹⁴ Instead of (4), most scientists refer to the memorandums of Joseph Carl Robnett Licklider (1915-1990) at MIT, whose idea of *Galactic Network* was precedent to the Internet.
- Licklider apparently did not think about a nuclear war, tackling more technological issues (Licklider 1963). In addition to Licklider’s work, the theory of communication through packet switching of Leonard Kleinrock (1934-) at MIT, and the *computer network* proposed by Lawrence Gilman Roberts (1937-2018) should be taken into account. Also, Donald Davis (1924-2000) at NPL and researchers at UCLA also played an important role (Bary et al. 2015).
- In spite of these specialists’ opinions, recently BBC doubly presented the same view as ours in the text, namely (4), when it reported the decease of Paul Baran (BBC 2015, see also Elmer-Dewitt 2001; Sterling 1993).
- ¹⁵ In reality, as of 2011, BBC reported the death of Paul Baran as such.
- ¹⁶ See their website (<https://www.rand.org/about.html>). RAND is a think tank in the United States, Interestingly enough, Dreyfus worked for RAND (Dreyfus 1965).
- ¹⁷ See the explication of Sato et al. (2007, pp.347-348, p.352).
- ¹⁸ See (8) in the text.
- ¹⁹ ARPA is the acronym of Advanced Research Projects Agency of Pentagon in the United States, to which Licklider also belonged (Licklider 1963). Reading this part of (7), we see the story of Baran in (3) and that of Licklider in note 14 intricately cut across each other in reality.
- ²⁰ See Dreyfus (1965).
- ²¹ See Dreyfus (1962), Dreyfus (1996), Dreyfus (2002).
- ²² Instead of “understanding the world,” Merleau-Ponty uses the French word “*la perception*,” naturally (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p.11, p.100, p.170; Kaneko 2017, p.151 note12). According to Dreyfus, the essence of Merleau-Ponty’s perception is the *intentional arc* and the *maximal grip* (Dreyfus 2002, p.367).

The *intentional arc*, which Merleau-Ponty also used in the name of “*un arc intentionnel*” (1945, p.170), means the tight connection between the agent and the world (Dreyfus 2002, p.367).

The *maximal grip* means the body’s tendency to refine its response so as to bring the current situation closer to an optimal gestalt (Dreyfus 2002, p.367).

Dreyfus reached these points through his discussion on *skill acquisition* (Dreyfus 1996; Dreyfus 2002, pp.368f.), while his study on Heidegger, especially the concept of *attuning* (*Stimmung*), affected him, seemingly (Dreyfus 1991, p.169; Dreyfus 2001, p.59).

²³ Dreyfus's criticism of this kind is typically found in his criticism of *distance learning* (Dreyfus 2001, pp.25f.).

²⁴ Here, Merleau-Ponty criticizes Sartre's philosophy of *transcendence* of objects and others (Sartre 1943, pp.27f., pp.265f.; Sartre 1938, pp.180f.).

²⁵ The translation is intentionally adjusted to our argument. The original is as follows:

Il y a, en particulier, un objet culturel qui va jouer un rôle essentiel dans la perception d'autrui: c'est le langage. Dans l'expérience du dialogue, il se constitue entre autrui et moi un terrain commun, ma pensée et la sienne ne font qu'un seul tissu, mes propos et ceux de l'interlocuteur sont appelés par l'état de la discussion, ils s'insèrent dans une opération commune dont aucun de nous n'est le créateur. Il y a là un être à deux, et autrui n'est plus ici pour moi un simple comportement dans mon champ transcendantal, ni d'ailleurs moi dans le sien, nous sommes l'un pour l'autre collaborateurs dans une réciprocité parfaite, nos perspectives glissent l'une dans l'autre, nous coexistons à travers un même monde. Dans le dialogue présent, je suis libéré de moi-même, les pensées d'autrui sont bien des pensées siennes, ce n'est pas moi qui les forme, bien que je les saisisse aussitôt nées ou que je les devance, et même, l'objection que me fait l'interlocuteur m'arrache des pensées que je ne savais pas posséder, de sorte que si je lui prête des pensées, il me fait penser en retour. C'est seulement après coup, quand je me suis retiré du dialogue et m'en ressouviens, que je puis le réintégrer à ma vie, en faire un épisode de mon histoire privée, et qu'autrui rentre dans son absence, ou, dans la mesure où il me reste présent, est senti comme une menace pour moi. La perception d'autrui et le monde intersubjectif ne font problème que pour des adultes. (Merleau-Ponty 1945, p.412)

²⁶ The translation is intentionally adjusted to our argument. The original is as follows:

La coexistence, doit être en tout cas vécue par chacun. Si nous ne sommes ni l'un ni l'autre des consciences constituantes, au moment où nous allons communiquer et trouver un monde commun, on se demande qui communique et pour qui existe ce monde. Et si quelqu'un communique avec quelqu'un, si l'intermonde n'est pas un en soi inconcevable, s'il doit exister pour nous deux, alors la communication se brise de nouveau et chacun de nous opère dans son monde privé comme deux joueurs opèrent sur deux échiquiers [distants] à 100 kilomètres l'un de l'autre. Encore les joueurs peuvent-ils, par téléphone ou par correspondance, se communiquer leurs décisions, ce qui revient à dire qu'ils font partie du même monde (Merleau-Ponty 1945 : 415).

²⁷ See the description by Raynolds (2016, sec. 3-a).

²⁸ See Dreyfus's criticism of Searle (Dreyfus 1999) and support of Heidegger (Dreyfus 1991, intro). In these works, Dreyfus clearly showed defiance to analytic philosophy.

²⁹ Representing Russell's theory of description.

- ³⁰ See the description in § 23 as well.
- ³¹ As for its categorization in the speech-act theory, see § 24.
- ³² As for utilitarianism, see note 2 again.
- ³³ See the argument of Bentham (1789, ch. v) and that of Kaneko (2017, p.87).
- ³⁴ See the explanation of Austin (1962, p.91, pp.101-102) and that of Kaneko (2017, p.52).
- ³⁵ See the explanation of Austin (1962, p.116) and that of Kaneko (2017, p.52).
- ³⁶ This discussion relates to my previous argument (Kaneko 2017, sec.36).
- ³⁷ See the book of Danto (1965).
- ³⁸ See the book of Hart & Honoré (1985).
- ³⁹ See the explanation of Kaneko (2012).
- ⁴⁰ See the discussion of Danto (1965, pp.212-213).
- ⁴¹ This leads us to the speech-act theory, not the static logical analysis abandoned in § 14.
- ⁴² Advice as objection can be classified into *expositives* in accordance with the speech-act theory (Austin 1962, p.162). *Expositives* are a type of speech-act literally exposing one's idea or view to the hearer to build or fit it into the frame of conversation, interlocution, dialogue, etc (Austin 1962, p.85, p.152, p.161; Kaneko 2017, sec.45). So there is no intention to offend the listener/reader as long as the utterance belongs to expositives.
- ⁴³ Insult is classified into *behavitives* in accordance with the speech-act theory (Austin 1962, p.161 see "For challenges..."). *Behavitives* show the reaction to what another person made for/against me (Austin 1962, p.83, p.152, p.160; Kaneko 2017, sec.39). For example, in the case of (12), you show in public your annoyance against the man's behavior on the BBS. Note that this does not include any successive behavior, and in this respect, behavitives differ from commissives, for example (Austin 1962, pp.151-152, p.157, p.163; Kaneko 2017, sec.42).
- ⁴⁴ See the argument by Grice (1967, p.24).
- ⁴⁵ See § 22 again.
- ⁴⁶ Both *psychopaths* and *harassers of morals* are observed to be ingenious manipulators of words (Hirigoyen 1998, pp.93f.; Stout 2005, p.7). In other words, they are criminals of speech-acts.

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